

**Statement by Simonas Šatūnas, Vice-minister of Energy
of the Republic of Lithuania, at the 61st Session of the
General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency**

Ms. President, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the election as the President of the 61st General Conference. Lithuania would also like to thank the IAEA Director General and the Secretariat for their professional and impartial work and congratulate Mr. Amano on his re-election as Director General.

Lithuania welcomes the application for membership of Grenada.

Lithuania fully associates itself with the statement made by Estonia on behalf of the European Union. In my national capacity, I would like to add the following.

The IAEA has taken up the central role in assisting in States' capacity to ensure that the development and use of nuclear power take place under the most rigorous safety conditions. The IAEA remains the key institution to set and monitor worldwide safety regimes when it comes to nuclear safety and we – the member states – should stay committed to the continued implementation and improvement of these safety regimes.

We equally value concerted efforts of the IAEA community in fortifying global nuclear security architecture that is all-inclusive, built on international standards, transparent in implementation on all levels, and resulting in a significant decline in global stockpiles of the nuclear weapons-usable materials.

Nuclear Safety

Nuclear safety remains the top priority for Lithuania. We welcome international efforts to strengthen nuclear safety regime in the wake of the Fukushima-Daiichi accident in Japan that had resulted in the consensual approval of improved IAEA safety standards and the Vienna declaration. Implementation of the IAEA safety standards should be transparent, responsible and non-selective.

Each country has the right to develop nuclear power, as long as the international obligations on nuclear safety are properly addressed and national decisions are taken in

consideration of a broader context of possible transboundary implications. The newcomer countries must be especially diligent in the implementation of the international standards and following the best practice should invite appropriate IAEA missions. This could be assumed as a stringent practice. Nuclear safety is indivisible. Safety failure in one area, can trigger a snowball effect which could threaten the safe operation of a NPPs. Even impeccable technology could fail, if we choose an unsuitable location for it or if we do not follow construction and operation requirements. The selective approach towards safety cannot be tolerated, as safety is comprehensive and must be seen as such.

We have known since long time ago that the best remedy to a problem is prevention. The IAEA offers excellent instruments to pursue this goal, i.e. the IAEA specialized missions. After the Fukushima Daichi accident, the member states were encouraged by General Conference resolutions to strengthen nuclear safety by requesting more actively the IAEA peer review services. The recent growth of demand for the IAEA peer review missions demonstrates increasing role and confidence in the IAEA services.

However, with regret I must admit that in reality, we observe faulty practices of the some newcomers adopting a declarative and selective approach towards nuclear safety and using the IAEA brand and its review services for manipulative public communication. Such behaviour undermines public support and understanding – not only of their own citizens, but also of the neighbours.

The IAEA specialized missions can bring the maximum expected added value if all related modules of IAEA missions are implemented in full scope at the appropriate stages of the project development. We cannot compromise the quality of evaluations by allowing countries themselves to select certain modules of missions as from a menu. It has to be up to the IAEA to provide indivisible package service for comprehensive evaluation. Consequent follow-up missions would help countries to ensure that all the IAEA recommended safety improvement measures are implemented.

Therefore, I urge all the member states and especially the newcomers, first of all, to make full use of the IAEA review services and to be focused on safety rather than on the project implementation schedule. Beneficiaries of the IAEA technical assistance

should consider safety requirements and recommendations mandatory and use the follow-up missions to ensure strict adherence to the IAEA safety standards.

Countries developing nuclear power are obliged to follow the principles of transparency and responsibility for the whole nuclear power plant life cycle – from proper selection of the site to host the nuclear facilities to the decommissioning of nuclear installations and final management of spent fuel and all the radioactive waste.

Nuclear Security

Ms. President,

Grave risks posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons - too evident today - forewarn of the urgent need for the nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states to jointly assume leadership and chart the course toward a safer world. Lithuania strongly condemns repeated illegal acts of the DPRK, violating multiple UN Security Council Resolutions and urges the DPRK to fulfill all of its commitments without any further delay. Gravity of the most recent violation calls for a tenacious international response exercising all diplomatic measures available. In this regard, Lithuania welcomes the unanimous adoption of the UNSC resolution 2375, a call for resolving the crisis through peaceful, diplomatic and political means and a set of balanced measures, designed to reflect and address concerns of international community.

Lithuania remains committed to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) as the foundation of the global nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament, and further development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Lithuania is supportive of the progressive approach in seeking practical ways toward a tangible advance in nuclear disarmament. It is for this reason we fear that efforts undertaken without the involvement of nuclear weapon states may contribute to dissension in fundamental international deliberations on nuclear security. Entry into force and universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) will be of a crucial importance to non-proliferation processes and constitute a fundamental step toward disarmament.

We strongly support commitments defined in the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. We have confidence in the CPPNM, as it is a fundamental international undertaking in the area of physical protection of nuclear material.

We are proud to announce that the IAEA International Physical Protection Advisory Service (IPPAS) Mission will be carried out in Lithuania in October 2017.

Non-proliferation

Lithuania continuously develops collaborative capabilities to address the threats of illicit trafficking of nuclear and radioactive materials and non-state actors' activities involving these materials via cooperation with international organizations and fora. Successful regional Nordic-Baltic high-level workshop held in Vilnius in June 2017, organized together with the Proliferation Security Initiative as a joint effort of the Governments of Lithuania and the United States, is a particularly noteworthy voluntary international cooperative effort to stop trafficking in WMDs, their delivery systems, and related materials to and from state and non-state actors of proliferation concern.

Finally, Ms. President,

Lithuania believes that development of nuclear technologies requires a comprehensive international collaboration and constant oversight, as nuclear accidents and radiological emergencies have no boundaries. Each country has the right to develop nuclear power and at the same time - the responsibility to do so in a transparent, safe and secure manner. The role of the IAEA in ensuring nuclear safety worldwide should be strengthened, alongside Agency's safety and security standards.

Lithuania would like to express its strong commitment to developing the nuclear power in the most responsible way, maintaining nuclear safety in its political and technical focus. Lithuania remains a staunch supporter of the global efforts to strengthen nuclear safety and security. I would like to assure you of our continuous support to the Agency and its fundamentally important activities.

I thank you, Ms. President.